



# 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 29, 2017

## Readings

*This week:*

Exodus 22:20-26

1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Matthew 22:34-40

*Next week:*

Malachi 1:14b–2:2b, 8-10

1 Thessalonians 2:7b-9, 13

Matthew 23:1-12

## Psalm

I love you, Lord, my strength. (*Psalm 18*)

## Today

Today's presider is Fr. Jack Izzo.

The Thomas Merton Center community worships and celebrates Sunday liturgy each week at the regularly scheduled 8:45 am parish Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. Members of the Thomas Merton community plan these liturgies in the spirit of Vatican II and its call to "full, active and conscious participation" in Catholic liturgical life.

The Thomas Merton Center is supported by your donations. If you choose to donate by check or cash, every Sunday there is a donation basket in the back of church or by the coffeepot after Mass—or you can use the envelope in the bulletin the last Sunday of every month to mail your donation. **Please do not put your TMC donation in the collection baskets passed during Mass (these are for parish contributions only).**

## Calendar

Wednesday, November 1

All Saints' Day (see parish bulletin for Mass times)

Sunday, November 5

Back to Daylight Savings Time

## From Thomas Merton

Persons are not known by intellect alone, not by principles alone, but only by love. It is when we love the other, the enemy, that we obtain from God the key to an understanding of who he is, and who we are. It is only this realization that can open to us the real nature of our duty, and of right action. To shut out the person and to refuse to consider him as a person, . . . we block off the reality of the other, we cut the intercommunication of our nature and his nature, and we consider only our own nature with its rights, its claims, its demands. And we justify the evil we do to our brother because he is no longer a brother, he is merely an adversary, an accused. To restore communication, to see our oneness of nature with him, and to respect his personal rights and his integrity, his worthiness of love, we have to see ourselves as similarly accused along with him . . . and needing, with him, the ineffable gift of grace and mercy to be saved.

—*Letter to Dorothy Day (20 December 1961)*

The Thomas Merton Center for Catholic Spiritual Development, P.O. Box 60061, Palo Alto, California 94306, was founded by a group of Roman Catholic lay persons in 1995, and incorporated in 1996, to offer Catholic liturgy; to augment, support and lead the development of ecumenical spirituality; and to foster new ways for Catholics and other Christians to develop a deeper spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ and, through him, with God. From its Catholic roots, it seeks to join with members of other faiths, Christian and non-Christian, to support religious education and spiritual development.

# COMMUNITY NOTES

*News Announcements Requests*

## **Altar of Remembrance is back:**

Today when you come to Mass, you'll see that our annual Altar of Remembrance is up, in front of the Mary altar. It is themed on the Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead, when our deceased loved ones are remembered and honored. At St. Thomas Aquinas, we are invited to bring photos of our loved ones whom we want to remember during November and place them on the altar. If you bring pictures, be sure to label them on the back with your name and phone number, so they can be returned to you if you forget to pick them up. The altar will be up throughout November, and will be taken down December 2, before Advent begins.



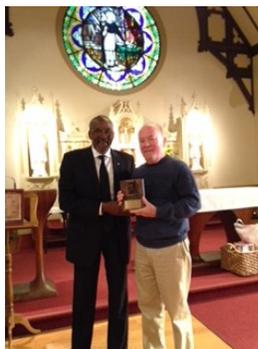
## **Advent retreat:**

Spiritual Ed is planning a morning Advent retreat with Fr. Kevin Ballard, December 2nd. Details later, but save the date now!

## **Talk by Fr. Bennett on November 7:**

On November 7, 7:00-8:30 pm, at St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center, Fr. Christopher Bennett for Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of San Jose will lead a workshop on *Planning Your Catholic Funeral*. This workshop will assist you in making choices about your funeral or that of someone close to you. Come with your questions about the liturgies for the vigil, funeral Mass, and committal service, as well as the services and options offered at the funeral home and the cemeteries.

## **John Arnold's SVdP award:**



(Photo by Rosana Madrigal)

Sorry we missed including this picture last week, but here is John Arnold receiving the St. Rosalie Rendu Supporter Award, for his work with the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The goal of SVdP is to offer tangible assistance to those in need on a person-to-person basis and to offer spiritual services. Today, and the last Sunday of every month, the parish takes up a second collection for SVdP. Your generosity today will assist our own local conference to help our neighbors in need.

## **Josie Colbruno's birthday party:**

Josie Colbruno wishes to thank everyone for the wonderful birthday party last Sunday, celebrating her 92nd birthday. She has "never had such a party in her life. Thanks to all her church friends, who feted her so fully.

(Photos by Kay Williams)



# COMMUNITY FORUM

*Ideas Opinions Reflections Concerns*

## **We cannot love God unless we love each other:**

*By Beth Haile at usatholic.org. Dr. Haile teaches moral theology at Carroll College in Montana, and is currently a writer living in Waterloo, Iowa.*

A few days after Election Day, I met with a dear friend who was struggling with unexpected anger after the election of Donald Trump. "I think of myself as a person who embraces diversity. But how diverse can I be if I hate half the people of this country?" She paused for a moment and then noted soberly, "Actually, I am beginning to understand how easy it is to dehumanize a group. All I see when I look at all those Trump supporters is a

bunch of racists and bigots."

It was a jarring statement. My friend is on the whole a very peaceful person who values pluralism and tolerance. But the run-up to the election and its aftermath were hard for her. When the neighbors put up a Trump/Pence sign, she found herself avoiding them. "I don't like it, but I

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This is the last Sunday of the month, so the bulletin includes an envelope for your monthly donation to the Thomas Merton Center. We rely on your support to keep this Mass and our programs going!

## ***Subsidiarity and the state's moral obligation:***

*By Kevin Clarke at uscatholic.org. This article also appeared in the March 2017 issue of U.S. Catholic.*

Ready or not, 2017 could prove to be the year of unanticipated subsidiarity—the idea that social needs should be addressed at the lowest level of personal, civic, or governmental authority capable of responding to them. Though Trump lost the national popular vote by nearly 3 million votes, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan claims the election of Trump is a voter mandate to dismantle federal-level social services that have served some of the nation's poorest and most vulnerable citizens. . . . In the past Speaker Ryan has rhetorically deployed the Catholic social teaching of subsidiarity in order to justify targeting federal programs such as Medicaid and Medicare. The spectacle of the next four years may show the federal government's retreat from a variety of social and civic challenges that had previously benefited from federal aid. Expect pullbacks not only in health care but in financial and banking industry oversight, efforts to mitigate climate change, and the enforcement of labor and clean air and water standards. How should Catholics respond? State and local governments will need to step up and fill the regulatory or social voids that will open up as the federal government recedes. The church may need to take a more activist role. . . .

How successfully state and local agencies respond to the abdication of responsibility at the federal level, however, will depend on how sincere purported fans of subsidiarity, such as Speaker Ryan, actually are. If local agencies are going to tackle the social problems of our times from the street level instead of waiting for a top-down assist from the federal level, they will need the resources to do the job. Will the money from federal cutbacks be "saved" in some manner to provide those resources? Unfortunately, if the past is a prologue, federal "savings" will simply be diverted into more tax breaks for an entrenched national elite or dissipated into an unreformed and insatiable Pentagon.

The flip side of subsidiarity suggests larger civic or governmental actors have a moral obligation to intercede when a social need cannot be addressed at a lower level. If Congress and the Trump administration don't acknowledge that moral claim, all the soaring rhetoric on subsidiarity will be worth what it can buy at the local food pantry—nothing.

Please remember in your prayers this week: Denise Alongi, George Bouchey, Tom Carmody, George Chippendale, Mary Connors, Ken Dias, Fr. Thierry Geris, Deonna Gill, Emily Gill, Joanne Hasegawa, Dick Jackman, François Jamati, Michael Kiriti, Hunter Kubit, Fr. Lavagetto's mother, Deacon Ysidro and Dolores Madrigal, Mary Rose McGuire, Maureen Mooney, Hayden Pastorini, Paul Prochaska, Anne Rush, Priya Smith, Bernice Sullivan, Jean Vistica, Dolores Walsh, Kay Williams, and T.J. Wooten.

## ***What is sin?:***

*By Kevin P. Considine, July 13, 2017, at uscatholic.org. Considine is an assistant professor of theology at Calumet College of St. Joseph in Indiana.*

When I was in high school, I wanted to go to a party. I knew that my parents would say no, so I lied and said that I was at a friend's house and went anyway. This was wrong, but was it a sin?

The Bible calls for us to "love God with all of our strength" and "love our neighbor as ourselves." In general, sin refers to free choices that harm and break our relationship with God and with others.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church categorizes individual sinfulness into venial and mortal sins. These two kinds of sins each injure the core component of being human—the ability to love God and to love others. They are choices that we make that either wound (venial) or seek to eviscerate and destroy (mortal) our very ability to love. In this way, they attack God's own image that we all carry, and through this attack jeopardize our communion, both now and into eternity, with the divine and with one another. We are creatures who yearn for relationship and mutual self-giving. The language of sin refers to those ways of living—thoughts, words, actions taken and not taken—that impede authentic, mutually self-giving relationships.

Sin is a break in a relationship thanks to our words, thoughts, actions, and inactions. My lie caused a small rupture in my web of relationships. It was a wound to myself, to others, and perhaps even to God. God's grace—reckless love that is healing, and empowering—brings us out of the depths of sinning and into our authentic selves. God reminds us who we are and how to love. But sin is more complicated than my lie to my parents: Sin can also occur on a social or structural level. Corporate or structural sin is more insidious but also attacks our very ability to love—God's image in us.

We often are unaware that we participate in structural sin. For example, a person may not harbor overtly racist attitudes or actions but still cooperate with the sin of structural racism. One may say the right things and form healthy interracial relationships while remaining complicit ("in what I have failed to do") in the complex webs in which black lives are devalued. The same can be true for our webs of relationships that affect women, the poor, the unborn, the disabled, and those whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual, to name a few.

Unfortunately our sacrament of Reconciliation is focused on individual sins and has yet to be fully integrated with corporate and social sinfulness. The sacrament directly addresses the scourge of venial and mortal sins in our everyday lives but it is less clear how we can communally atone for our structural sins.

## ***We cannot love God unless we love each other, continued:***

just can't stand to be around them and the views they hold," she told me. "They oppose everything I stand for." This exchange reminded me of an encounter that Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, had with an explicitly anti-Semitic and racist elderly guest whose "greatest affliction was having to share the hospitality of the city with Negroes." Despite the repugnance of his views, Day insisted that this man was still a guest and ought to be welcomed as "Christ among us" by the Catholic Workers.

It can be easy to romanticize the poor, but Day knew that those whom we are called to serve are quite frequently disagreeable and often sinful. As a spiritual practice, hospitality teaches workers to abandon any expectations they may have and resist the ever-present temptation of self-righteousness. Hospitality in its truest form is "making room" for the guest we do not choose. It requires vulnerability and a willingness to be surprised by who we find at our door.

This is particularly challenging when the guest at our door professes values, tacitly or explicitly, that are not only contrary to our own, but, as in my friend's case, immoral. Yet Jesus ate with sinners. It is one thing to imagine a dinner with adulterers and tax collectors; it is quite another to imagine sharing a table with racists, sexists, xenophobes, and anti-Semites.

For Day, pacifism emerged from such a radical hospitality. To welcome any guest as Christ, particularly a sinner, we need to experience what she called a "disarmament of

heart." This disarmament of heart undergirded the neutrality of the Worker movement during the Spanish Civil War, despite the fact that many Catholics argued for supporting Franco as a last defense against Communism. Day insisted that her workers prayed not for the Franco supporters, nor for the Communist loyalists, but for "the Spanish people—all of them our brothers in Christ—all of them Temples of the Holy Ghost, all of them members or potential members of the Mystical Body of Christ." Far from "being passive," Day's response to violence was to act "disarmingly," to remove any barriers that stood in the way of love. The most effective response to violence, thought Day, was a hospitality that humanized. In *The Long Loneliness*, she writes:

*We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love we must know each other. We know Him in the breaking of bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone anymore.*

My friend's comments about Trump supporters reveal how deep and visceral the divisions in our country are. The Christian tradition with its commitment to radical hospitality equips us to be a force of unity and reconciliation, but only if we are willing to adopt a sort of Catholic Worker neutrality and make room for our neighbors—in our homes and in our pews—without casting judgment or taking sides. This does not mean that we do not stand up to evil in the world, but it does mean that we refuse to fight on the world's terms. We can begin by being attentive to opportunities to open our door and say "come in."

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## ***30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time:***

*Abridged from an article by Maryknoll Father Thomas Henehan, at maryknollog.com.*

One day after the Sunday Mass with an Aymara Indigenous community in Cochabamba, Bolivia, a young woman approached me with a small child in her arms. She asked for a blessing for her baby that she was leaving behind this week to migrate to Europe. She was also leaving behind two other children and a mentally handicapped brother who lived with her.

When I asked why she was leaving she told of how impossible it was for her to feed the family and how she found hope in the offer to work in a Scandinavian country. . . . Unfortunately her situation is similar to the more than 65 million men, women and children who migrated from one country to another in 2015.

. . . The first reading today reminds us that we all are aliens. And that is to be the attitude we carry throughout our lives when we relate to others, especially to the most vulnerable among us. . . . The Vietnamese theologian Father Peter Phan maintains that the phenomenon of mi-

gration is changing our understanding of Church, of God and theology as understood through the lens of migration. Father Phan reminds us that creation is in itself a migrating phenomenon moving from one reality to another. In the first reading, we are told that God hears the cries of the suffering migrants, helping us understand that God is indeed a migrant God who is aligned with the migrant. God understands migrants because God is a migrant God. The Father sends the Son who migrates from Divinity to Humanity. It is the spirit who energizes the migrant to venture out to the unknown and it is the Spirit who welcomes the migrant to the new territory.

. . . The word of Jesus that today we recall and celebrate in this Eucharist is an invitation to shake our passivity, to recover the ethical indignation at the intolerable situation of the world called modern and civilized, and return to the essentials of the Gospel, the greatest and first commandments, to the two loves; Love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself. . . and never forget that you were once aliens yourselves.